

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS

- Extensive research has been conducted on substance use within college athletics. However, much of the literature that exists does not specifically explore marijuana use among Black male student-athletes.
- The student-athletes in this study reported being offered or pressured to use pain medications, but not informed of the potential risks to their physical and emotional health.
- Athletes reported they don't use marijuana just to get high, but to deal with the isolation of being a Black male student-athlete or disruption to athlete identity that can lead to depression and anxiety.
- Exploitation, microaggressions and racism are also commonplace on campus and can be amplified if the team or individual athletes are not performing well, further compounding the mental and emotional stressors of being a student-athlete.

For many Black-male student athletes, their sport is all they think they have and they only identify as an athlete. If that is taken away from them or disturbed, they need something to help them cope..marijuana is a way to cope.

QUESTIONS FOR PRACTICE

1. What supports are in place in my athletic program or on my campus for college athlete's mental health? Are services provided by a licensed mental health care provider?
2. Do these supports include culturally responsive approaches specific to the experiences of Black men who are college athletes and other student-athletes of color?
3. Do our athletic program staff and campus health service providers explain the risks to mental and emotional health of pain medications to our student-athletes?



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Additional resource:

- [NCAA Mental Health Best Practices](#)
- [When the lights go on: Vernon Adams Jr & the Making Of A Winner](#)

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